



State of California

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Training and selection standards for correctional peace officers still lag behind

The state authority responsible for developing selection and training standards for correctional peace officers has been too slow in accomplishing its mission, thereby leaving a critical need unaddressed, the Office of the Inspector General reported today.

In a 15-page report, the Inspector General criticized the Corrections Standards Authority for failing to address numerous shortcomings in the development of correctional peace officer selection and training standards identified in an earlier, May 2005 audit of the former Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training. The Corrections Standards Authority inherited responsibility for developing the standards from the commission after the latter was eliminated in a July 2005 reorganization of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

“Having sound, professional training standards and preparing well-trained correctional officers is critical to the safe operation of the state’s overcrowded prisons,” said Inspector General Matthew Cate.

Developing correctional peace officer selection and training standards was the core mission of the former Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training. Yet, the Inspector General’s 2005 audit found that the commission had not met for nearly a year and in the seven years

of its existence had developed standards for only 7 of the 27 correctional peace officer job classifications for which it was responsible.

Along with responsibility for developing selection and training standards, the former commission was also charged with administering a correctional peace officer apprenticeship program. But the Inspector General's 2005 audit found that the commission was not adequately monitoring the apprenticeship program and that the program was threatened with decertification because of non-compliance with state and federal apprenticeship standards. After the commission was abolished, responsibility for the apprenticeship program shifted to another entity inside the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation — the Office of Training and Professional Development.

In the follow-up review released today, the Inspector General found that the two successor entities to the Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training had implemented almost none of the seven recommendations issued as a result of the 2005 audit.

The follow-up review determined that the Corrections Standards Authority had met only twice — in March and July 2006 — and had made some progress toward developing training standards by recently contracting with the California State University, Sacramento Foundation to conduct job analyses on which future training standards would be based. Among the most important of the job analyses are those governing correctional officer, youth correctional officer, and youth correctional counselor classifications, which constitute nearly 80 percent of the department's correctional peace officer positions.

Meanwhile, since assuming responsibility for monitoring the correctional peace officer apprenticeship program, the department's Office of Training and Professional Development has not yet accomplished the task of bringing the program into compliance with federal and state apprenticeship standards, with the result that the program is still threatened with decertification.

“Although the Corrections Standards Authority has made a slow start in developing classification standards—especially those that relate most critically to the department's overall operations — it has at least taken a step in the right direction,” said Inspector General Cate, “whereas, judging by all appearances, the Office of Training and Professional Development has made little progress in bringing the correctional peace officer apprenticeship program into compliance with recognized standards.”

A bargaining agreement between the state and the California Correctional Peace Officers Association specifically requires the operation of an apprenticeship program for employees training to be correctional peace officers. The agreement expired on July 3, 2006 but remains in force until a new agreement can be negotiated and agreed upon by the parties. A new agreement could abolish or significantly modify provisions pertaining to the apprenticeship program.

The full text of the Inspector General's follow-up review can be viewed and downloaded from the Office of the Inspector General's web site at <http://www.oig.ca.gov/>. To view the report on the web site, click on the report title, "Follow-up Review of Recommendations Pertaining to the Former Commission on Correctional Peace Officer Standards and Training," on the home page or on the link titled "Reports" under the Bureau of Audits and Investigations.

The Office of the Inspector General is an independent state agency responsible for oversight of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The office carries out its mission by conducting audits, special reviews, and investigations of the department to uncover criminal conduct, administrative wrongdoing, poor management practices, waste, fraud, and other abuses by staff, supervisors, and management. The follow-up review was conducted under the authority provided to the Inspector General by Penal Code section 6126.

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